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## INTRODUCTION

### **What is the Health Resources and Services Administration?**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is a champion in the battle against health disparities in the United States. As the "Access Agency," HRSA has a long tradition of serving U.S. populations that experience poor health status and health disparities based on race/ethnicity, gender, income, insurance status, rural or urban geographic location, age, sexual orientation, housing status, and occupation. For example, approximately 60 - 70% of people served by HRSA programs are people of color, and an equally high percentage of people have incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level. Historically, HRSA programs have assured access to high quality, culturally competent health care for underserved, vulnerable, and special-needs populations. The Agency supports over 80 major programs with a budget of \$4.8 billion in Fiscal Year 2000 and leverages funds from other sources that equal four to six times this amount invested by the Federal government.

In 1999, HRSA formalized its commitment to the elimination of health disparities by structuring its strategic plan around the goal of "100 Access and 0 Health Disparities." Consequently, every HRSA program and activity is in some way related to the goal of eliminating health disparities. Through its programs, HRSA has established a continuum of activities to analyze and address issues related to increasing health care access and eliminating health disparities.

Eliminating  
Health  
Disparities

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## Who Does HRSA Serve?

In Fiscal Year 1999:

- 60% of the Nation's African American infants, 70% of the Nation's Asian/Pacific Islander infants, 59% of the Nation's Native American/Alaska Native infants, and 40-60% of the Nation's Hispanic/Latino infants were served by HRSA-supported maternal and child health programs.
- Over 2 million pregnant women obtained health and related services from Title V supported programs and over 60 Healthy Start Communities.
- 9 million medically underserved clients received health care services at HRSA-supported health centers through 40 million health encounters at approximately 3,000 sites. Two-thirds of these clients were people of color: 34% were Hispanic/Latino, 26% were African American/Black, and 4% were Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native. 41% of clients were uninsured, and 85% had incomes at or below 200% of poverty. Over 450,000 clients were homeless, and 500,000 were migrant or seasonal farm workers.
- People living with HIV/AIDS accessed over 2.8 million health care visits through HRSA-supported HIV/AIDS programs. Two-thirds of these clients were people of color: 44% were African American/Black, 21% were Hispanic/Latino, and 1% were Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native. 39% had no insurance coverage.
- 4 million people residing in Health Professions Shortage Areas were served by 2,500 clinicians serving in the HRSA-supported National Health Service Corps.
- 2 million people residing in rural areas had access to health care via HRSA-supported rural health programs. 70% of these people were either uninsured or recipients of Medicaid or Medicare.
- Over 250 rural communities had access to primary health care, specialty care, or educational services supported by over 60 HRSA telehealth grants.
- Health professions programs received financial support from HRSA and graduated 2-5 times more people of color and disadvantaged students than other health professions programs.